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NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE: COMMODITIES AND DEVELOPMENT
(PAUL BOEKER INTERVIEW)
(TAPE INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR:

THE SO-CALLED "NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE" -- THE MULTINATIONAL TALKS BETWEEN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS -- HAS FOCUSED LARGELY ON QUESTIONS RELATING TO EQUITABLE PRICES FOR WORLD COMMODITIES AND THE LARGER ISSUE OF HOW MUCH AND IN WHAT WAY THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM SHOULD BE CHANGED. VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN LOOKS AT SOME OF THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE RECENT MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT THAT WERE DESIGNED TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THESE QUESTIONS.

VOICE:

IF NOTHING ELSE WAS ACCOMPLISHED, THE UNCTAD MEETING IN NAIROBI MAINTAINED THE MOMENTUM IN THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE INITIATED AT LAST SEPTEMBER'S SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY. PAUL BOEKER, A SENIOR U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL WHO HEADED THE AMERICAN DELEGATION TO THE UNCTAD MEETING, HAS THIS ASSESSMENT OF THE NAIROBI CONFERENCE:

TAPE: CUT ONE: BOEKER

"A VERY USEFUL PROGRAM OF ACTION WAS AGREED ON BY ALL THE NATIONS THERE, OVER COMING YEARS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMODITIES FIELD AND IN THE AREA OF TECHNOLOGY, THE RESOLUTIONS REFLECTED THE PRIORITIES OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND THE PARTICULAR AREAS OF STRESS OF UNCTAD THAT WERE PUT FORWARD BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AS THE TARGETS FOR ACHIEVEMENTS AT THIS PHASE OF THE BROADER NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE ON DEVELOPMENT ISSUES. SO THESE TWO CHALLENGES, I THINK, WERE VERY SUCCESSFUL MET AT UNCTAD AND WERE REFLECTED IN A NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS WHICH WERE ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS. AND IT IS THAT NEGOTIATING PROCESS, OR REACHING CONSENSUS BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS AND THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND HAVING A RESULT OF THAT PROCESS BE A BROAD AND CONSTRUCTIVE ONE THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE LAUNCHED AT THE SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION IN NEW YORK LAST FALL."

ANNCR:

THE UNCTAD MEETING PRODUCED VERY EXTENSIVE AND DETAILED RESOLUTIONS ON MEASURES BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE THE STATUS OF THE LEAST ADVANTAGED NATIONS. THESE INCLUDE COMMODITY BUFFER STOCKS, DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, TRADE, THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, AND THE LIKE. MISTER BOEKER HAS THIS TO SAY ON THE RESOLUTION CONCERNING COMMODITIES.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- BOEKER

"IT WAS AGREED (AT THE UNCTAD MEETING) TO HAVE A QUITE AMBITIOUS AND FULL SCHEDULE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY DISCUSSIONS OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS...DISCUSSIONS WHICH BOTH THE CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS OF INDIVIDUAL COMMODITIES ARE COMMITTED TO CARRY AS FAR AS THEY CAN IN TERMS OF WHAT KIND OF ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE AGREED TO, UP TO AND INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF COMMODITY AGREEMENTS. THE SCHEDULE OF CONSULTATIONS LEADING TO POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS OF ACTUAL AGREEMENTS WILL BE BEGINNING THIS FALL AND CARRIED FORWARD OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS. AND SECOND, THE UNCTAD AGREED TO SET IN PROCESS A SERIES OF CONSIDERATIONS ON A BUFFER STOCK FINANCING MECHANISM, INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF A COMMON FUND AS PROPOSED BY THE UNCTAD OVER THE NEXT YEAR OR SO SIMULTANEOUS WITH COMMODITY NEGOTIATIONS."

ANNCR:

THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES IT WOULD BE MORE PRACTICAL TO COMPLETE NEGOTIATIONS ON INDIVIDUAL COMMODITY AGREEMENTS BEFORE FIRM DECISIONS ARE MADE ON A COMMON FUND TO FINANCE BUFFER STOCKS FOR THE EIGHTEEN COMMODITIES UNDER CONSIDERATION. NONETHELESS, IT HAS AGREED TO JOIN IN THE PREPARATORY DISCUSSIONS ON THE COMMON FUND IN AN EFFORT TO BRIDGE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES ON COMMODITY PRICE STABILIZATION.

FOR ITS PART, THE UNITED STATES PROPOSED AT THE UNCTAD MEETING THAT AN INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES BANK BE ESTABLISHED TO SPUR PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF RAW MATERIALS IN THE LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE BANK WOULD ACT AS A THIRD PARTY IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN INVESTORS AND

HOST COUNTRIES. THE U.S. RESOLUTION WAS DEFEATED, EVEN THOUGH IT RECEIVED A VERY FAVORABLE REACTION FROM ALL OF THE INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES AND SUPPORT FROM A NUMBER OF DEVELOPING NATIONS. AGAIN, MISTER BOEKER.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- BOEKER

"IT WAS OUR VIEW AND STILL VERY STRONGLY IS THAT UNDER EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES THERE ARE ENOUGH UNCERTAINTIES AND RISKS INVOLVED IN INVESTMENT IN VERY LARGE NATURAL RESOURCE PROJECTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND UNLESS COUNTERED IN SOME WAY BY AN EFFECTIVE NEW INSTITUTION SUCH AS THE RESOURCES BANK, THE PATTERN OF INVESTMENT WILL BE ONE THAT IS NEITHER ECONOMIC NOR IN THE INTEREST OF THE PROGRESS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WE THINK THAT THIS PROPOSAL HAS CONSIDERABLE MERIT AND PROMISE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND WE WILL BE PURSUING IT, IN FACT WE ARE ALREADY PURSUING IT, IN APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL FORUMS INCLUDING THE CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN PARIS."

ANNCR:

WITH THE HELP OF MR. PAUL BOEKER WHO HEADED THE U.S. DELEGATION AT UNCTAD, WE'VE BEEN LOOKING AT SOME OF THE ECONOMIC ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AND THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE RECENT UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AS A FIRST TOWARD RESOLVING THESE ISSUES.

GH/RCS